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ABSTRACT

The Transformational Leadership theory proposed by J. M. Burns (1978) may be profitably applied to the role of debate/forensic coach. A Transformational Leader aims to fulfill the personal needs of followers by giving them the power to think and act for themselves, thus empowering them to work toward the group vision. A Transformational Leader must be creative, interactive, visionary, empowering, passionate, and ethical. Coaches must evoke creativity from the squad. Coaches must also be interactive with student followers, interaction being the method to achieve the vision or broad purpose that the leader should understand. Leaders must also empower student followers through interaction. Coaches must be passionate about their role as leader and apply the highest standards possible to their squad and professional responsibilities. Coaches should try to adapt the theory of Transformational Leader to their squad. Finally, coaches have a responsibility to foster the personal and professional growth of students, the leaders of the 21st century. (Author/SR)

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COACH AS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER: PRAGMATIC IMPLICATIONS

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COACH AS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER: PRAGMATIC IMPLICATIONS

This paper applied the Transformational Leadership theory proposed by Burns (1978) to the role of debate/forensic coach. The paper describes the basic and specific points of the Transformational Leadership theory. A Transformational Leader must be creative, interactive, visionary, empowering, passionate, and ethical. Coaches must evoke creativity from the squad. Coaches must also be interactive with student followers, interaction being the method to achieve the vision or broad purpose that the leader should understand. Leaders must also empower student followers through interaction. Coaches must be passionate about their role as leader and apply the highest standards possible to their squad and professional responsibilities. Coaches should try to adapt the theory of Transformational Leader to their squad. Finally, comment is made about the responsibility that coaches as leaders have to their squad. Coaches have a responsibility to foster the personal and professional growth of students, the leaders of the 21st century.

COACH AS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER: PRAGMATIC IMPLICATIONS

Coaching a debate and individual events squad is a consuming activity. As a coach, one must be not only be a surrogate parent, but a manager of smart young people. This role that the debate coach takes on is quite like any other leader that brings warriors to battle, cohesion to an organization, or supporters to a popular cause. Leadership is as endemic to debate and forensics as it is to any other group of thinking organisms.

As with any position where people are molded into a cohesive community, the coach may potentially fall prey to the "M" disease, which is the lack of leadership influence that a manager has. Managers influence others by the exclusive use of power and external motivation. Leaders must transcend the use of external stimuli to create an internal motivation in the follower. Leadership is human communication which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet group goals and needs (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). By definition, leaders use their oral communication talents to influence others to change. Leaders motivate others by establishing a vision, sense of community, needs fulfillment, and encouraging participation with the followers. Managers lack the ability to go beyond controlling others which leads to the loss of potential talent their group holds.

The purpose of this paper is to apply the Transformational Leadership theory to the position of coach. Initially, this paper will describe the transformational leadership theory. Second, the paper will apply the theory to the forensics coach position and make implications about the forensics coach as transformational leader.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

The Transformational Leadership theory was first presented by James McGregor Burns in the 1978 book Leadership. The theory is distinguished from other leadership theories on many levels, perhaps most notably is the basic framework of the model. Many leadership models have been structured around personality traits, situational constraints, and the functional roles that managers play (Brilhart & Galanes, 1992; Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Few theorists have developed an approach that satisfies both the situational constraints and the functional roles that leaders play. The Transformational Leader theory is one such model that "represents a bold and exciting perspective for understanding and explaining leadership." (Hackman & Johnson, 1991, p. 67).

Basic Tenants

Perhaps the most central notion of the transformational leader is the explicit purpose behind leading others. A transforming leader acts to maximize the needs of the follower. All behavior must be an action that stimulates the needs of the organization of people. The term "transformational" stems from the ability to develop people as resources, which moves them to a more satisfactory state of existence than before the leader. A corollary to this notion is the idea that the transforming leader empowers others to think for themselves. Many leadership theories presume that the leader must control all, but the transformational leader recognizes that giving up power to a follower empowers them to think which motivates them to excel. The transforming leader also grooms a

sense of groupness or community within the human organization. The purpose of the group becomes primary to the leading of others. While the importance of individuals is emphasized, the vision that leaders hold must be of propelling the group toward their destination. The transforming leader has been described as a visionary person (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), being capable of not only understanding the future, but in creating the vision in others as well. The concept of purpose fits very well within the vision, it is the driving force needed to attain the vision. Purpose is grounded in the leaders ability to motivate others toward the end objective - the vision.

Another related idea the transformational leader embraces is the idea of self-management. Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggest that a leader must manage self before leading others. Few would disagree that the leader must be 'able to take what they dish out'. Bennis and Nanus (1985) summarize self-management by stating that it stems from the notion that the leader must place high standards on themselves in terms of their own performance. Management of self implies that leaders must subserve their appetites and focus on the needs of the group. Self-control and discipline are integral factors to the success of the transforming leader. Managing self further implies that the leaders ethics may be the highest ethical statement made within a human organization. The transformational leader becomes the social architect of the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). In fact, the actions of the leader have elevated importance. Burns (1978) suggests that "the result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that...converts leaders into moral agents." (p. 4). The leader

sets the tone of ethics within the social organization (Peale & Blanchard, 1989). Without stringent self-managed standards for ethics, the social organization risks probable dissolution.

All of these concepts are held together by the method of action of the transformational leader. The leader uses communication as a tool to achieve the vision through an ethical means. Bennis and Nanus (1985) confirm this notion when they discuss the importance of open communication. Much support has been given to the need for open honest interaction between organizational members (Goldhaber, 1990). In order to transcend the hierarchal power structure, the leader must use communication as the tool of creating understanding between different levels of the social organization. Leaders must not only manage their own behavior, they must be able to communicate their vision so others may embrace it as well. The transformational leader uses participation as a means of gaining the perspective of the follower, not as pseudo concern.

Specific Characteristics

Hackman and Johnson (1991) identify five personality characteristics that leaders have. Initially, creativity is a key element of the leader. Hackman and Johnson (1991) suggest that creativity is "challenging the status quo by seeking out new ideas..." (p. 64). Managers typically concern themselves with status quo maintenance, but leaders move beyond status quo to face and deal with the future (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Certainly, the importance of creativity is compounded due to unique task of creating a social reality for many followers. The needs of many may only be met through long period of creative reflection by a leader.

Creativity has also been discussed as a tool for more effective problem solving (Brilhart & Galanes, 1992; Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Without a doubt, creativity is an element that the leader must possess to create reality and motivate action.

Secondly, Hackman and Johnson (1991) suggest that an interactive leader provides better direction than non-interactive leaders. In order to meet the needs of the follower, the leader must take a posture of open participation with follower. Goldhaber (1990) further suggests that effective superiors must participate with employees. Other authors (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Brilhart & Galanes, 1992; Burns, 1978; Peters & Waterman, 1982) also note that the effective leader must have the ability to participate with followers. Moreover, participation must be more than a casual passing notation, truly effective leaders genuinely desire to know the understanding of the follower in relation to the task under consideration.

Third, Hackman and Johnson (1991) indicate that vision is an important component of the effective leader. In fact, vision is perhaps the most elemental characteristic of the transformational leader "more than anything else, transformational leaders communicate a vision to their followers" (Hackman & Johnson, 1991, p. 65). The transformational leader must create a shared vision with the follower, in other words they become the social architect for the follower performance. Tichy and Devanna (1986) suggest that "the challenge for transformational leaders is to...find and create a vision of an organization that is in some way better than the old one and to encourage others to share that dream" (p. 122). Bennis and Nanus (1985) concur by indicated that the leader creates a

reality for their followers. This social reality is the bedrock of the communication of the vision. Hackman and Johnson (1991) also continue to note that the vision helps to rally action toward achievement of the goal. Tichy and Devanna (1986) indicate that leaders must mobilize the organizational energy behind the vision. One final note, leaders must not only speak the vision, they must also act the vision out to the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Blanchard and Peale (1989) further suggest that an inappropriate action can doom the organization to a poor outcome, because actions speak quite loud to followers.

Empowerment is fourth idea that Hackman and Johnson (1991) suggest is important for the leader. Empowerment is the ability to "translate intention into reality and sustain it [for the followers]" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 80). Bennis and Nanus (1985) further suggest that empowerment is the reciprocal of power and that empowerment puts duality into motion. In other words, power translates into empowerment and empowerment, in turn, creates more power. Hackman and Johnson (1991) suggest that empowerment occurs through participation and involvement between leader and follower. Other authors have considered this same concept, suggesting that empowering followers can be the act that elevates a leader to "superleader" status (Manz & Sims, 1989).

Finally, the transformational leader is passionate in their commitment to task and people alike (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Bennis and Nanus (1985) elaborate, "like explorer, and artists, [leaders] seem to focus their attention on a limited field - their task - to forget personal problems, to loose their sense of time, to feel competent and in control" (p. 76). Blanchard and Peale (1989)

infer that passion and commitment are important when they note patience and persistence as independent steps in doing the right thing. Peters and Waterman (1982) suggest that remaining with the business the company knows best is one of the eight basic principles of effective organizations. The inference is pretty clear, leaders must be prepared to stay the course with gusto and passion.

One noticeable omission is that of high ethical standards. This one facet is perhaps as important as any other, therefore, any application must include some mention. Blanchard and Peale (1989) suggest that a manager with strong ethical standards is armed with the ability to do the right thing all of the time. They further conclude that ethics must not only be the result, but ethics must be involved in the process of decision making. An effective leader must be committed to ethical responses to any situation.

In sum, the five basic facets Hackman and Johnson (1991) isolate are very important to the effective leader. Debate coaches must be creative, interactive, visionary, empowering, passionate, and ethical in order to transform followers needs into reality.

APPLICATION OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL TO COACHING

The basic outlook of the forensic coach is critical to the personal growth of the students. Coaches should focus on fulfilling student needs rather than using the position to solidify their own needs satisfaction. The Transformational Leadership theory, unlike the Managerial theory, strives to meet the needs of the group. It is important that coaches realize that their teams will not be exactly the same from year to year. Coaches must be able meet the

needs of novice squad members, as well as returning squad members.

Diversity is inherent in all squad activities. It is important that coaches create an atmosphere that allows for diversity and encourages purpose and direction. Open communication allows all students the chance to new and exciting friendships. This type of environment also gives each student a chance to experience beliefs, attitudes, and values that differ from their own. This environment should not foster behavior that would lower the esteem of members. Coaches must allow freedom in student interaction, but not at the expense of slowing students growth.

Coaches can insure students success by providing a purpose and sense of direction for the group. Team members, especially secondary students, desperately need a sense of purpose in their quest for overall understanding of their self. Coaches can provide this type of environment and a sense of purpose by capitalizing on the six major characteristics of the Transformational Leadership model: creativity, interaction, vision, empowerment, passion, and high ethical standards.

Creativity

Creativity is a concept in which leaders challenge the status quo by seeking out new ideas without fearing failure. Creative leaders realize that failure is an important step in heading towards success. Creativity is a valuable tool to combat stagnation of the entire squad and often can create a synergistic effect - one creative act leads to more creation. Overall, a creative outlook, while not always successful, is more likely to produce effective outcomes than status quo maintenance. Debate coaches might

interject creativity by encouraging students to develop new techniques, introducing unique teaching methods, or encouraging students to participate in a camp experience.

Developing new topic perspectives gives the students a chance to see how a different case would stand up to competition. If put together correctly creative cases can be highly successful because opposing teams are unlikely to be prepared for them. Even the middle of the topic case can take on new meaning when it is creatively rewritten before a key tourney. Forensics coaches could risk failure by encouraging students to perform pieces that can be considered non-traditional. Coaches must be willing to introduce new innovative ideas to their team. This helps students to find a different topic focus and can be one means of creating interest.

The creative coach is one who uses teaching methods that are not the status quo. Creative teaching techniques force the students to consider different alternatives. Mock tourneys and alternative in-class formats are two examples of these different techniques. Mock tourneys give the students a chance to experience what they will be doing in an actual tournament. This goes a long way in helping the student feel comfortable in knowing what to expect in a real tourney. Alternative in-class formats give the students the opportunity to expand their horizons by performing in a format that they may not be customed to. Students can pinpoint both good and bad aspects of their performances and strive to improve on these aspects. A creative debate/forensics coach is one who encourages different cases and pieces and uses creative teaching methods.

Coaches can encourage students to attend summer camps. Camps give students the opportunity to meet other coaches, as well as

people within their own age group. These camps can help provide understanding for concepts that a coach may have less expertise in. Camps can also expose students to new topic approaches, which taps the creative talent before debates on the topic have even started. Camps also provide students with the opportunity to interact with others about the same frustrations and establish long-term friendships among the debate/forensic community. This is beneficial for retention of the student.

In sum, creativity is important for the generation of student interest in the topic and the activity. Through the development of new topic approaches, introduction of new teaching methods, and encouragement to participate in camp experiences leaders can tap the greatest potential that students hold.

Interaction

Leaders must be aware of the needs and motivation of others. Perhaps the only way to determine the needs of followers is to participate with them. Leaders must also be able to identify abstract concepts that the students would not understand. Leaders should articulate and define ideas and concepts that escape others (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Coaches should be able to explain concepts related to the activity since most novice students would not have the initial ability to grasp abstract concepts. In short, the follower has the burden of communicating the needs, and the coach has the responsibility of communicating the relevant information to satisfy the desired need.

Perhaps most important for interaction between the coach and student is the relationship that is built between the two. Coaches

should be able to observe students, and students should be able to learn from the coach. Effective learning rests on unsure ground without a supportive, interactive relationship. When students have problems the coach probably has a responsibility to talk to the student and offer assistance and understanding. This is critical because it shows the students that the coach is approachable and is willing to act for the student. Coaches must put themselves in a position to be available to students, because an open door policy will facilitate student followers wanting to use it. Coaches must also be assertive in finding problems, and searching for students who are likely to need their assistance would be the best way to integrate interaction easiest. Coaches must look like they enjoy the interaction with student followers, because nonverbal cues can make a major impression on students who sense a distracted listener.

There are a few activities that can help a coach interact better with the student. The coach can detail the concepts and then help the students apply them in a practice round or in a mock performance for forensics. This method gives a coach a chance to guide the students through the material that is unfamiliar to them. In order to perform this the coach must understand the concept in order for the student to visualize their success. Success is a vital part of making the students feel good about themselves.

The camp experience can be of value here as well. Students who are reticent often avoid other students and coaches. The shyness can be overcome by encouraging the students to place themselves in an interactive environment where they can meet new friends. Tournaments can serve the same function, but often the friendships that develop out of tournament practice takes longer to groom than a

camp friendship.

Interaction should be a cornerstone of the coaching philosophy. Even if the management style you adhere to is autocratic, interaction between the coach and student is essential to effective directions. When students feel like they cannot interact with the coach, they will be likely to take their complaints elsewhere. Coaches can interact with students by guiding them through tough times, teaching new concepts, or encouraging them to take steps that allow them to meet others with whom they can associate.

Vision

The leader must help establish a cohesive direction in which the group is positioned, and rally followers towards achievable goals (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Leaders are the social architect of the group or organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). As leaders, coaches have a basic responsibility to display the plan that they have for the future. Coaches need to provide vision for the team so so that all behaviors that occur can be evaluated on the basis of moving the group toward its objective. This direction is important for students who have little understanding of the processes of debate or forensics. The range of possible outcomes for future behaviors diminishes once the student understands that behaviors either help or don't help the group meet its vision. Some possible means of establishing vision should be noted.

First, coaches must gain a perspective of objectivity about the performance of their members. In order to assess the potential of the group, the coach must have an understanding of the history, causes, and status quo of the group. This is perhaps the most

important step because specific behaviors can be deduced from the vision. From this understanding, the coach can determine the future state that is most likely and the best case of the group.

Second, the coach should set squad goals with the team at the beginning of each debate or forensics season (DeStephen, 1982). Coaches play a pivotal role in setting goals due to the experienced base of knowledge that they possess. It is imperative that most of the members be involved in the goal setting process. The team will be different each year, so all members must realize that the same basic goals will not be attainable each year. Goals must be clear, concise, and written so that the group will have to expend energy to achieve the desired outcome.

Third, the coach should encourage students to set individual goals, because students are challenged by a different set of outcomes. This may be the major motivation behind participation in debate or forensics. The squad leadership must make sure the individual goals are not in conflict with group goals. Students should be encouraged to set goals that challenge them, but the goals should be attainable by the student. Coaches must overlook this stage of goal setting as well to insure a balance in challenge and achievability to support the self-esteem of the student.

Goal attainment is an essential part of the process of vision. However, vision goes beyond a mere goal setting process, because it is a process that is based on experience, and contemplation about probable outcomes. There is no magic formula for creating vision. It is based on an inspired understanding of the way things could be and will be for the individual group of people. Goals help to formalize the vision process, but they are not a substitute for it.

Empowerment

The transformational leader must be empowering. An empowering leader encourages participation and involvement with the follower. A leader must also realize that individual success can be the basis for team success (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Coaches must try to provide an atmosphere in which they lead the students, but avoid over controlling them. Students must be offered the opportunity to create their own fullest potential within themselves. Students could come up with some very exciting ideas of their own especially the experienced students.

For example, coaches might let their debaters write their own cases, if they have the ability. While the case might not be very competitive, it allows the students the freedom to try some ideas of their own. The same concept holds true for a forensics team. Coaches should encourage students to find their own material, while discouraging the student away from pieces that are patently distasteful. Students should be offered the opportunity to pick their own pieces so that they can perform something that they feel suits their talents. Overall, coaches must be constantly looking for an opportunity to empower students while maintaining social order to achieve the vision.

The empowering leader creates an environment in which the group has the freedom to exchange ideas. Empowerment gives the students the feeling that they are actually accomplishing something on their own, which gives them the sense of purpose that is critical in helping fulfill their needs.

Passionate

The transformational leader is passionate about the purpose of the group, and is emotionally committed to that purpose (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). The effective leader is very energetic and will go through the necessary means to be successful. Passion is the ability to "pour one's energy into the task" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 71). Coaches, like leaders, must expend energy to complete the task. Coaches must have a sense of purpose and strive to meet that purpose with their entirety. Debate and forensic coaches must be passionate about their jobs, and must work hard for themselves and their students. Students need a positive role model who they can respect and look up to. Coaches do this by getting involved with the activity. Effective coaches should guide the students and help them look for new ideas for the activity. This type of coaching gets the students excited about what they are doing, which makes the activity fun and worthwhile for everyone involved.

In order to create passion, the coach must understand that dedication is the key to intrinsic motivation. Students can probably sense when a coach is not committed to a squad. Coaches without a desire to succeed will send strong nonverbal message to students, so they must learn to excite themselves about their squad. Activity is a positive sign indicating passion, so coaches should act energetic about the activity. Passion can be expressed externally through communication or creative behavior. Transformational coaches are those who are passionate in getting students motivated through their own work and dedication.

Ethical Standards

The transformational leader must be an ethical person. Leaders should do just what they expect their followers to do. Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggest that leaders should set high standards for their own behavior. In their words, a leader should manage self before leading others. Manz and Sims (1989) further suggest this same notion when they define the leader as someone who creates the ability to lead in others, or self-leadership. Presumably, self-leadership is akin to the ability of making the right decision without the express consent of the leader charged to observe. Several implications of the ability to ethically set a standard of behavior can be deduced.

Coaches who set standards for their students should follow these rules themselves. For example, coaches should not set a rule stating that students can not make harmful remarks to others if they make harmful remarks themselves. When coaches see something that they don't like from students, they should correct the behavior and then live by that behavior themselves. DeStephen (1982) suggests that coaches promote "development of constructive group norms and extinguish undesirable group norms" (p. 5-6).

Not only should the coaches live by the standards that are set, but they should impose self-management techniques that instill a positive model for students. Manz and Sims (1989) write that every behavior communicates something, so positive behaviors produce a positive model for students to follow. Positive modeling can be as easy as being prompt to every meeting you attend, or as avoiding the use of language that puts the underdog at a disadvantage. In sum, the coach should be able to treat themselves like any other person.

The final implication of the ethical coach deals with the notion of self-leadership of the followers. Without reservation, squads have members that lack maturity that is needed to conduct themselves in a socially redeeming manner. The duty of the coach is to provide a positive role model for these individuals. Perhaps the toughest challenge of a coach is to reach out to the students who are least likely to succeed and guide them to a successful conclusion. The basic drive for the coach should be to generally increase the maturity and ability of the student, which can be insured by promoting self-leadership.

Ethical behavior sends a strong signal to followers about the standards that coaches have. Coaches should make a strong effort to act the way that they would like their students to act, in other words, as a positive role model. Ethical coaches insure strong teams with standards above reproach.

SUMMARY

Coaches have a responsibility to lead students to higher levels of personal and professional growth. Coaches must also realize that power and control may not be the most productive management tool. The manager type of influence might help to achieve some levels of success, but ultimately falls short of unlocking the full potential of the group. The Transformational Leadership Model moves beyond controlling others to fulfill the personal needs of followers. The primary mechanism to fulfill needs is premised on giving followers the power to think and act for themselves. This in turn empowers the follower to work toward the group vision.

One final general implication of leadership is based on the outcome that leaders wish to encourage. Students will learn and grow based on the role model that they are provided with. Leaders have a direct stake in the development of student leadership for the future. Coaches, as role models, have an obligation to provide the most positive role model for students they can. Only through effective leadership techniques can the example that students follow be set for them.

The purpose of the leader is not to control the group, but to provide a positive vision through high ethical standards. Communication is a critical element of the process because it allows for interaction between leader and follower. The more the vision is communicated the greater the chance for a successful outcome. The traditional management model falls short here because interaction suffers due to the group focus. The Transformational Leadership Model meets the objective of communicating vision through the six primary foci: creativity, interaction, vision, empowerment, passion, and ethical standards. Coaches can successfully fulfill individual as well as group needs by applying this model to their philosophy.

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